

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claim Amendments

The Applicant has amended claim 1; claims 3 and 4 have been canceled. Applicant respectfully submits no new matter has been added. Accordingly, claims 1-2, and 5-12 are pending in the application. Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Applicant notes with appreciation the allowance of claims 7-12. The Applicant also notes with appreciation the conditional allowance of claim 4. As the Examiner has suggested, claim 1 has been rewritten to include the allowable limitations of claim 4 and the intervening claim 3. Therefore no amendments have been made to narrow the scope of the pending claims or to create any sort of estoppel.

As noted above, claim 1 has been amended in order to overcome the Examiner's objections. Consequently, the Applicant believes claims 2 and 5-6 are also in a condition of allowance. The Examiner's consideration of these claims is also respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a)

Claims 1-3 and 5-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Onoe et al (US Patent Number 5,361,396) in view of Ernam et al, (US Patent Number 6,148,201) in further view of Boudreau et al (5,396,681). In order to expedite allowance of this application, the Applicant has canceled claim 3 without prejudice. Therefore, rejection with respect to this claim is deemed to be moot.

The Applicant has incorporated the allowable limitations of claim 4 and intervening claim 3 into claim 1. The Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 and the respective depending claims 2 and 5-6 are now allowable because of the novel limitations now present in claim 1.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing remarks, the Applicant believes all of the claims currently pending in the Application to be in a condition for allowance. The Applicant, therefore, respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and issue a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims.

The Applicant requests a telephonic interview if the Examiner has any questions or requires any additional information that would further or expedite the prosecution of the Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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